

DATA keeping tow truck operators' heads above water

By Jordan Nunziato

Tow truck business owners and operators in Orangeville continue to feel the financial squeeze as Orangeville Police Services (OPS) neglect the rotation mandate of the Orangeville Towing Association (OTA) favouring Chambers Towing.

However, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is using the Dufferin Area Tow Association (DATA) rotation list, which all OTA members are members of as well.

Richard Croft, a tow truck operator who is also the area supervisor for TSN Towing and Storage, has confirmed that each company receives two to three calls per month from DATA, but that if they relied on OPS, each would receive only one call every three to four weeks.

Dufferin OPP's Community Service Officer, Constable Paul Nancekivell, said when they are at an accident scene, unless the customer requests their own tow service themselves, they do not recommend a tow service, but ask for the next tow truck on the DATA list.

'Once in a while, what we'll do, if it's a bad traffic situation where we're waiting for a tow truck and it's causing congestion or it's dangerous, if a tow truck is on the scene, we'll grab them,' he said. 'That's in extreme circumstances.'

Asked whether OPP needs an enclosed yard to impound, Nancekivell replied, 'It depends on the weather conditions and depends on the vehicle. It depends what occurrence it is.'

'If it's something where we're going to try to do (finger)prints or something, we may be able to take it to our own yard if it's available, or we might put it indoors,' he said.

'Some of these other facilities have it indoors,' he added. 'For instance, Chambers isn't the only heavy tow in the area; A Plus and Royal also have heavy tow. So, that's the point of using DATA tow so we go through list to see who's first available on the list. We do that to make it fair.'

Brian Woodland of BW Towing said he doesn't understand how it cannot be fair like it was five years ago.

'I used to tow those cars into the Orangeville Police Department when it used to be on Centre Street. There's no reason why we have to have it the way it is, especially for the impounding,' he said. 'We work for the OPP. We do all that kind of stuff and we have a fenced in yard where (BW Towing) is, and we've had no problems with them. (The OPS) are taking money away from people's livelihood.'

Tim Nuhn, owner of TSN Towing and Storage, said that they've been called to towing sites by OPS and then told to drop because Chambers Towing had been called.

'It is wrong because we don't get paid for our time being there,' he said. 'We make those runs for nothing.'

Dave Pettipas of Dave's Towing responded to Police Chief Joseph Tomei's statement in a recent article on the subject regarding the lack of impounding. 'We followed Chambers around for a day and we caught him doing three roadside suspensions in one day.'

As difficult as the situation is for most local tow truck businesses due to this alleged favouritism by the OPS, Rob Howes, President of OTA and owner of Orangeville Towing, said he has talked with members of the association, and only half are on board for change.

'I told them that if it's not a 100 per cent thing with the association, then the association won't be going any further on it,' he said.

The DATA list includes the same nine firms on the OTA list but also has four others, W & K Towing of Grand Valley, Shelburne Tire & Towing, Rosemont Towing and Mono Auto Body.